



Report on the Delivery of the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty

Scrutiny Programme Committee

16th November 2021

Contents

1. Aims and Objectives	3
2. Assessment	4
3. Plans and Priorities	10
4. Resources	12
5. Delivery and Performance	14
6. Case Studies	22
7. Challenges and Risks	28
8. Future Priorities	30

1. Aims and Objectives

Swansea Council's Corporate Plan sets out six key council priorities, one of which is Tackling Poverty – so that every person in Swansea can achieve their potential.

Swansea Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy defines poverty as:

- Income below the Minimum Income Standard (the Minimum Income Standard is based on what the public think people need for an acceptable minimum standard of living as researched by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation).
- Inadequate access to necessary services of good quality.
- Inadequate opportunity or resource to join in with social, cultural, leisure and decision making activities.

Swansea Council's Tackling Poverty Strategy aspires to achieve a Swansea in which:

- Income poverty is not a barrier to doing well at school, having a healthy and vibrant life, developing skills and qualifications and having a fulfilling occupation.
- Service poverty is tackled through targeting resources where they have the most effect, with decision about that made in conjunction with service users.
- Participation is enjoyed by all our residents, who have the opportunity and resources to join in with social, cultural and leisure activities and decision-making.
- Residents maximise their income and get the most out of the money that they have.
- Residents avoid paying the 'poverty premium', the extra costs people on low incomes must pay for essentials such as fuel and transport.
- Barriers to employment such as transportation and childcare are removed.

2. Assessment

Causes and consequences of poverty

Poverty is caused by things that reduce resources, or increase needs and the costs of meeting those needs. Causes of poverty can also be consequences which can then create a cycle known as the poverty trap. Common triggers of poverty are often life changing events or changes in circumstances such as becoming sick, bereavement, redundancy or relationship breakdown.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation states that some of the causes of poverty in the UK today are:

- **Unemployment and low-paid jobs lacking prospects and security (or lack of jobs)**
- **Low levels of skills or education**
- **An ineffective benefit system**
- **High costs** of housing and essential goods and services
- **Discrimination** can prevent people from escaping poverty through good qualifications or jobs, and can restrict access to services.
- **Weak relationships:** A child who does not receive warm and supportive parenting can be at higher risk of poverty later in life, because of the impact on their development, education and social and emotional skills. Family relationships breaking down can also lead to poverty.
- **Abuse, trauma or chaotic lives:** Neglect or abuse as a child or trauma in adult life, as the impact on mental health can lead to unemployment, low earnings and links to homelessness and substance misuse.¹

The Bevan Foundation stated in February 2020 that:

“Estimates show that all parts of Wales have more than one in five people living on a low income. Nowhere is free of poverty... The idea that poverty can be tackled by focusing on the worst affected places is fundamentally flawed. Instead, what’s needed is a commitment to solve poverty across the whole of Wales...poverty exists across the whole area and that solving it through inclusive growth, affordable housing and support for families is vital.”²

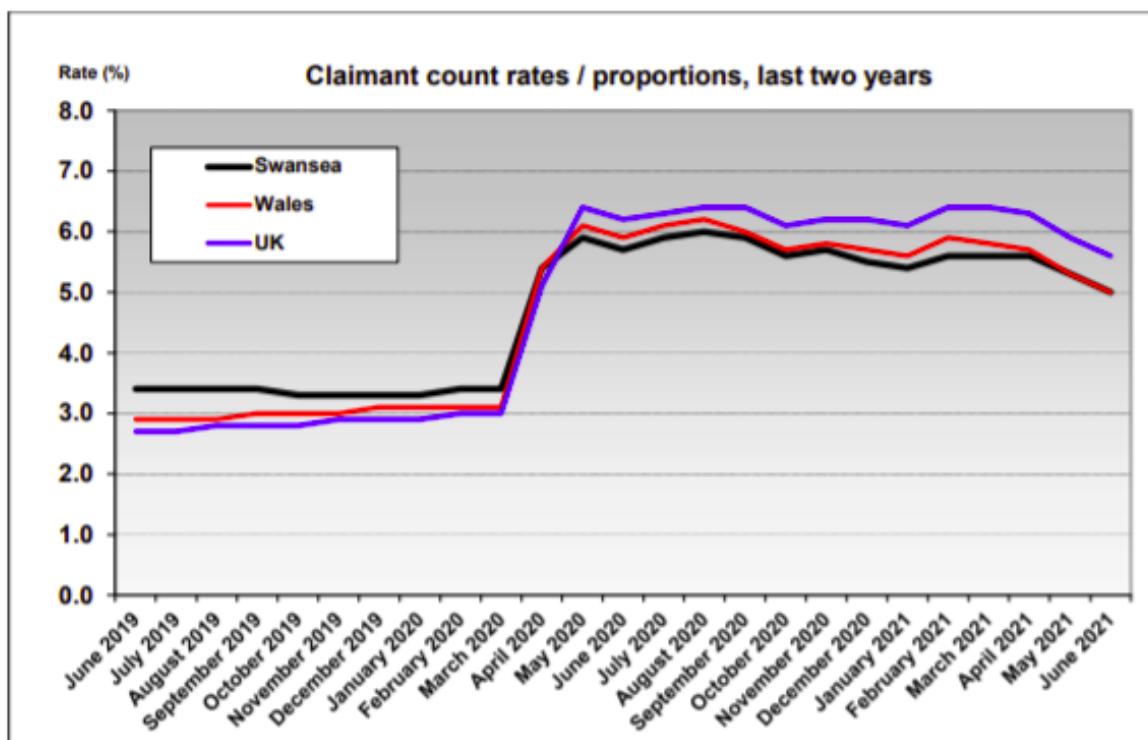
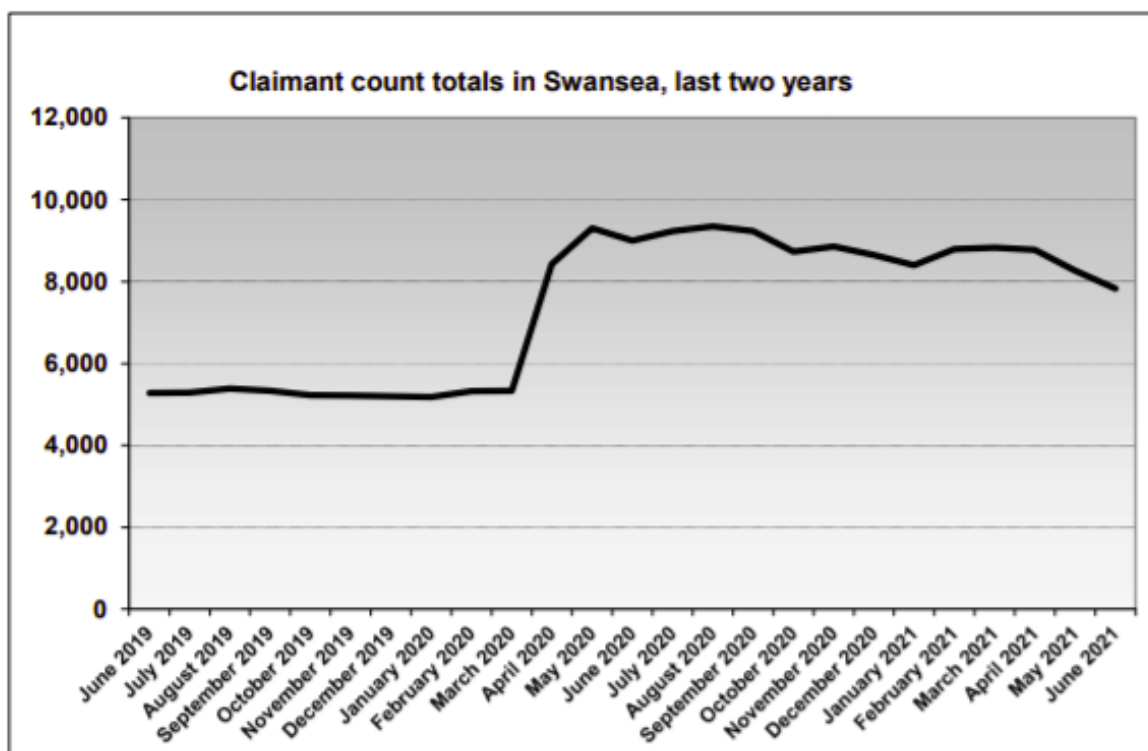
Claimant Count Rates

Claimant count – defined as all people who claim Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA, plus claimants of Universal Credit (UC)) who are required to seek work and be available for work.

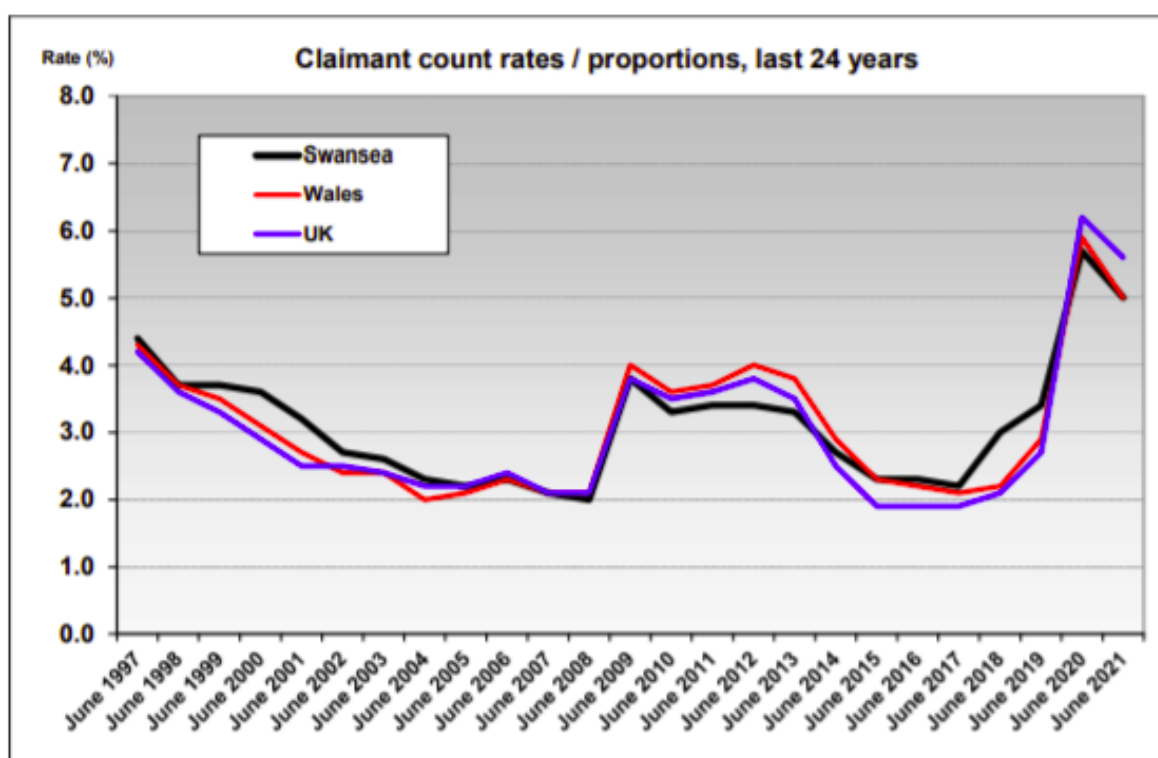
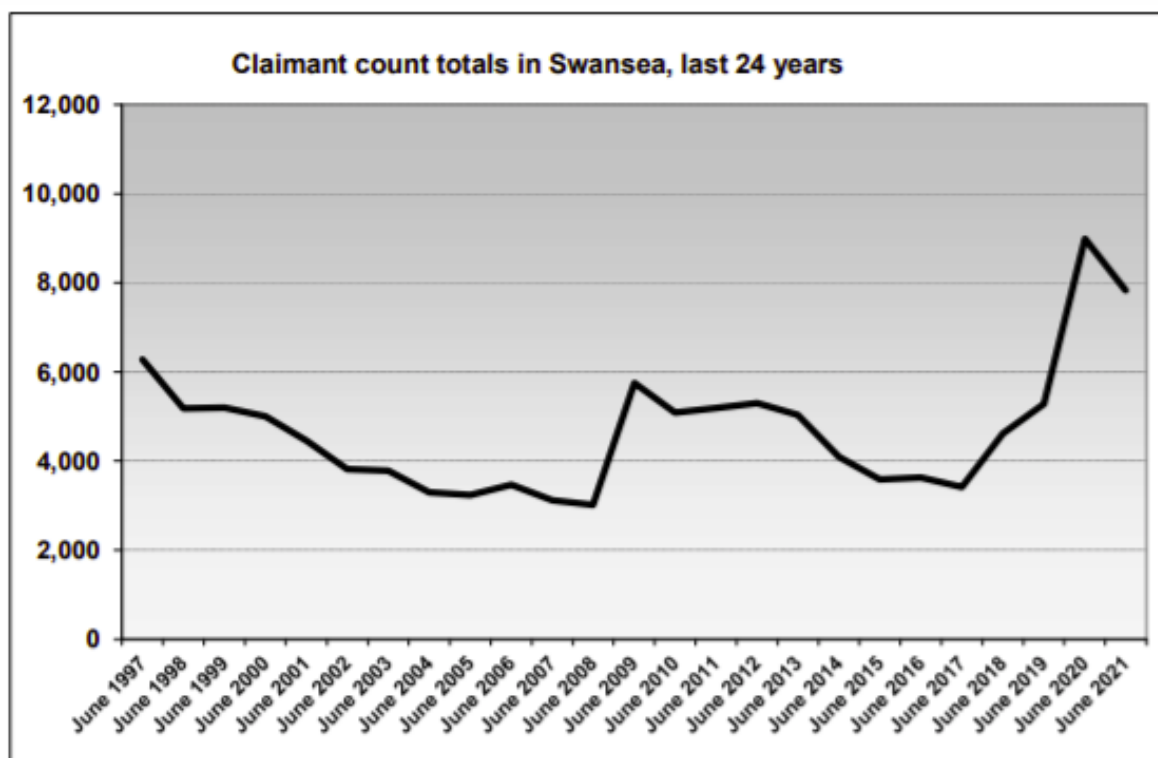
¹ www.jrf.org.uk/our-work/what-is-poverty

² <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/views/poverty-is-everywhere-in-wales/>

June 2019 – June 2021



Last 24 years



Earnings

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides information about the levels, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours worked for employees to local authority level.

The median weekly full-time earnings figure for residents in Swansea stands at £538.00 (April 2020); which is 0.7% lower than the Wales figure and 8.1% below the UK average.

WEEKLY earnings	Swansea	Swansea (% of Wales)	Wales	UK	Swansea (Workplace)
FULL-TIME employees	£538.00	99.3	£541.70	£585.50	£531.90
% change on previous year	-4.6%	-	+0.3%	+0.1%	+2.5%
Male full-time	£534.80	95.1	£562.40	£619.00	£521.10
Female full-time	£551.90	107.1	£515.40	£543.00	£534.80
PART-TIME employees	£201.50	96.3	£209.30	£202.80	£212.70
ALL employees	£444.80	99.3	£447.80	£479.10	£447.30

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2020, ONS.

Over the period April 2019 – April 2020, the survey estimates suggest that full-time weekly earnings fell by 4.6%, whilst figures for Wales and the UK remained relatively constant.

The Annual Earnings data shows that the Swansea median full-time figure (2020) of £27,480 is 2.8% lower than the Wales average, although both Swansea and Wales figures are below the UK average (in Swansea by 12.6%). Over the year 2019 – 2020, average annual full-time earnings in Swansea fell by 2.3%, whilst Wales and UK figures increased – as shown below.

ANNUAL earnings	Swansea	Swansea (% of Wales)	Wales	UK	Swansea (Workplace)
FULL-TIME employees	£27,480	97.2	£28,273	£31,461	£27,058
% change on previous year	-2.3%	-	+1.5%	+3.6%	-0.6%
Male full-time	£26,747	89.2	£30,000	£33,923	£26,534
Female full-time	£29,089	110.7	£26,287	£27,981	£28,039
PART-TIME employees	£11,004	96.1	£11,455	£11,234	£11,511
ALL employees	£23,164	97.9	£23,665	£25,780	£22,833

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2020, ONS.

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is designed to identify the small areas of Wales that are most deprived. It ranks small areas according to their relative deprivation levels across eight types of deprivation to produce an overall index. There are 1909 small areas, Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Wales and 148 in Swansea. The WIMD was last updated in 2019.

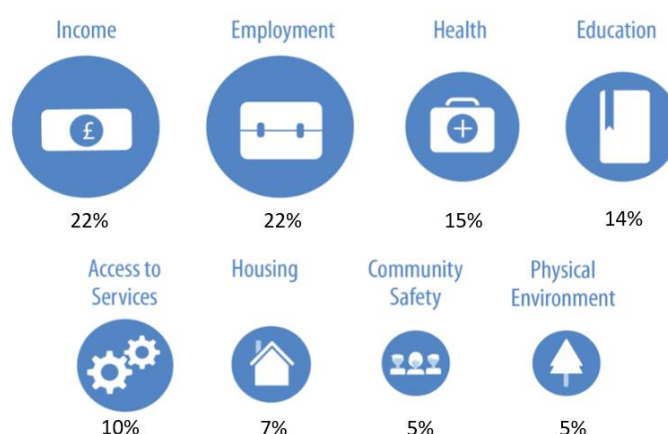
The WIMD can be used for:

- Identifying the **most deprived** small areas
- Comparing **relative** deprivation of small areas
- Exploring the 8 **types** of deprivation for small areas
- Comparing the proportion of small areas within a **larger area** that are very deprived
- Using **indicator data** (but not ranks) to compare absolute change over time

The WIMD cannot be used for:

- Quantifying how deprived a small area is, or how much more than another – the difference between two ranks can be tiny or large
- Using ranks to infer change over time (as they are relative measures)
- Identifying deprived people – not everyone who is deprived lives in a deprived area
- Comparing with other UK countries - each country measures deprivation slightly differently
- Measuring affluence - lack of deprivation is not the same as being affluent

Deprivation is the lack of access to opportunities and resources which we might expect in our society. The WIMD assesses eight types of deprivation known as domains. The domains are weighted for the overall index.



Swansea ranks 7th across the 22 Welsh Local Authorities in terms of the percentage of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% of LSOAs in Wales, joint 7th with Caerphilly in the top 20%, 10th in the top 30% and 12th in the top 50%.

Swansea contains 148 LSOAs (7.8% of the 1909 total LSOAs in Wales). Of the 10% most deprived LSOAs in Wales within the overall domain, 17 are within the Swansea local authority area which accounts for 11.5% of those in the local authority area and 0.9% of those in Wales. They are shown below:

Name	Code	LA Rank (of 148)	Wales rank (of 1909)
Townhill 2	W01000863	1	16
Townhill 1	W01000862	2	18
Penderry 3	W01000832	3	22
Castle 1	W01000742	4	23
Penderry 1	W01000830	5	31
Townhill 3	W01000864	6	32
Castle 2 North	W01001955	7	36
Mynyddbach 1	W01000817	8	37
Townhill 5	W01000866	9	41
Penderry 4	W01000833	10	48
Townhill 6	W01000867	11	58

Bonymaen 1	W01000738	12	81
Morrison 5	W01000810	13	95
Penderry 2	W01000831	14	147
Morrison 7	W01000812	15	154
Penderry 6	W01000835	16	157
Llansamlet 8	W01000801	17	179

An overview of the domains within the WIMD 2019 for Swansea as shown below:

WIMD Domain	LSOAs in top 10% most deprived	% of LSOAs in Swansea	% of LSOAs in Wales	LSOA areas
Income	19	12.8%	1.0%	Townhill 5,1,2,3,6 / Penderry 1,3,4,2,5,6 / Castle 1,2 North / Mynyddbach 1 / Morrison 5,7 / Bonymaen 1 / Cockett 8 / Llansamlet 8
Employment	22	14.9%	1.2%	Castle 1,2 North / Penderry 3,4,1,2,6 / Townhill 2,6,5,1,3 / Mynyddbach 1 / Morrison 5,7 / Bonymaen 1 / Cockett 2 / Sketty 4 / Llansamlet 8 / West Cross 3 / Landore 2 / Penyrheol 4
Health	18	12.2%	0.9%	Penderry 1,3,4,6 / Townhill 2,1,3,5,6 / Castle 1,2 North / Mynyddbach 1 / Bonymaen 1 / Morrison 9,5 / Cockett 2 / St Thomas 1 / Llansamlet 8
Education	17	11.5%	0.9%	Townhill 1,3,2,6,5 / Penderry 1,5,4,3,6,2,7 / Mynyddbach 1 / Bonymaen 1 / Castle 1 / Llansamlet 8 / Cockett 8
Access to Services	2	1.4%	0.1%	Gower 1 / Mawr
Community Safety	15	10.1%	0.8%	Castle 2 North,4,7 East,3,7 West / Morrison 7 / Llansamlet 1 / Cockett 7,8 / Mynyddbach 1 / Landore 2 / Penderry 3,6,1 / Townhill 5
Physical Environment	2	1.4%	0.1%	Pontarddulais 2,3
Housing	11	7.4%	0.6%	Castle 6,4,5,8 / Uplands 9,4,6,7,8 / Landore 4 / Cwmbwrla 1

3. Plans and Priorities

The Tackling Poverty Steps set out within the Corporate Plan are to:

- Provide a joint and holistic response to poverty, population health and homelessness during the Council's Covid-19 response and recovery.
- Continue to implement the Tackling Poverty Strategy and ensure that tackling poverty is everybody's business.
- Target resources to maximize access to opportunity and prosperity and focus on utilising data to target support, employability and financial inclusion.
- Support the establishment of a Poverty Truth Commission to bring together key decision makers with people who have direct lived experience of poverty to work together to bring about change.
- Work with our Health partners to ensure that, through our Early Years Strategy, children in their early years and at Foundation Phase achieve their expected language, emotional, social and cognitive development and are ready for learning and for school.
- Ensure that young people are able to access employment, education or training after reaching 16 years of age.
- Help to address the impacts of Welfare reform, such as supporting people to claim the full benefits they are entitled to so that they are able to maximise their income and promote access to affordable credit.
- Support individuals to overcome their barriers to employment through coordinated person-centred employability support.
- Provide art, culture and heritage opportunities in order to boost skills, confidence, self-esteem and aspiration.
- Invest to improve housing and build more energy efficient Council homes and support the building of affordable housing to help meet housing need, reduce fuel bills, regenerate estates and bring wider economic and employment benefits.
- Prevent homelessness and support people to maintain their tenancies to help provide stability and security for families and communities by implementing the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2018-22.
- Explore creating our own energy venture to provide low-cost energy to homes helping to tackle high domestic fuel bills and fuel poverty. Support tackling climate change and help eradicate fuel poverty and boost economic development through the ARBED scheme and energy efficiency measures in social housing.
- Continue to implement the Community Cohesion Delivery Plan to promote cohesive and inclusive communities in Swansea.

The case studies in section 7 provide examples of these steps to Tackle Poverty.

Swansea's Tackling Poverty actions align to the seven well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 including:

- A Prosperous Wales – Maximizing benefit take up and entitlement and providing a single gateway to employment support.
- A Resilient Wales – Building more energy efficient Council homes and affordable housing to meet housing need, regenerating estates and bringing wide environmental, economic and employment benefits.
- A Healthier Wales – Providing free or low cost art, cultural and heritage events through a wide range of talks, workshops and activities aiming to address health and wellbeing.
- A more Equal Wales – Creating employment and training opportunities for the long-term unemployed and economically inactive through community benefit clauses in Council contracts.

- A Wales of Cohesive Communities – Implementing the Community Cohesion Delivery Plan to promoting cohesive and inclusive communities in Swansea.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language – Accessible arts, culture and heritage, boosting skills, confidence, self-esteem and aspiration.
- A globally responsible Wales – Tackling climate change through energy efficiency measures in housing and building more energy efficient Council housing.

The Socio-Economic Duty aims to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage and supports this through ensuring that those taking strategic decisions:

- Take account of evidence and the potential impact.
- Through consultation and engagement.
- Understand the views and needs of those impacted by the decision, particularly those who suffer socio-economic disadvantage.
- Welcome challenge and scrutiny.
- Drive a change in the way that decisions are made and the way that decision makers operate.

In April 2020, the Council adopted a new Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020-24 and further embedded the Tackling Poverty priority into core Council business by introducing an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), to assess the impact of decision making on people, including those living in poverty. A Future Generations and Strategic Equality Board has been established which includes the Cabinet Members for Equalities and Poverty to ensure that work around both Poverty and Equalities is integrated and embedded across the organisation.

Actions to Tackle Poverty are delivered in each Directorate across the Authority, examples include Free School Meals in Education, Council Tax Reduction scheme in Resources, Beyond Bricks and Mortar in Place, and further details of delivery are in section 5. A dedicated Tackling Poverty Service is based in Social Services.

The Tackling Poverty Service works with residents through a strength based approach to increase their well-being, skills and qualifications and to gain sustainable and fulfilling employment and maximise household income. The service contributes to the reduction of crisis intervention and demand on services, contributing positively to resident's resilience, health and well-being.

Tackling Poverty Service Objectives:

- Increase the number of Swansea residents in sustainable and fulfilling employment
- Increase the number of adults with skills and qualifications, ensuring pathways for progression and enhancement of their employability and well-being
- Maximise household income, supporting residents to access their rights and entitlements and make the most of the money they have
- Embed Tackling Poverty as Everyone's Business within Swansea Council and champion change in policy and practice to be more effective in tackling poverty
- Reduce and prevent the impact of poverty by working in partnership and through the implementation of the Poverty Strategy and Partnerships
- Contribute positively to resident's Health and Well-being
- Support strength based connections with people to pursue their goals
- Contribute to the reduction of crisis intervention and demand on services

4. Resources

Core funding for Poverty and Prevention is split across three service areas within Social Services:

21/22	
Child & Family Services	£1,727,100
Commissioning Hub	£1,993,800
Tackling Poverty Service	£739,200
Total	£4,460,100

The funding within Child and Family is allocated to Early Help Hubs, NEETs team, the Evolve Young Peoples Services and the Domestic Abuse Hub.

The Commissioning Hub, commission a broad range of providers as well as internal services. This includes the Partnership and Involvement team to carry out our duties to listen to children and young people, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Third Sector Support, Play and Early Years duties as part of our statutory duty and early intervention and prevention disability services and services for parent carers.

The Tackling Poverty Service includes Food Poverty Grants, Men's Sheds, Period Dignity Grants, Legacy Fund, Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus, Lifelong Learning, Tackling Poverty Development, Local Area Coordination and Welfare Rights.

Tackling Poverty Service Budget

Tackling Poverty Service	20/21	21/22	Change
Core	£846,875	£739,200	-13%
Grants	£3,576,433	£4,335,856	21%
TOTAL	£4,423,308	£5,075,056	15%

The Tackling Poverty Service is funded predominately via grant with approximately 15% core funding.

The Social Services Commissioning Hub Team oversee the delivery of Early Intervention and Prevention external funding which contributes to Tackling Poverty which includes:

Welsh Government provide grant funding streams which contribute to tackling poverty. The Housing Support Grant (HSG) together with the Children and Communities Grant (CCG) form the Funding Alignment programme and for Swansea provides circa 30 Million of funding on an annual basis.

Funding Alignment provides financial flexibility that facilitates the delivery of outcomes, which enables us to further align and improve Early Intervention and Prevention Support services together, ensuring the right support reaches the right people at the earliest opportunity. There is a clear expectation that the Children and Communities Grant and the Housing Support Grant should work in a seamless fashion, providing integrated services where appropriate to support those most vulnerable within our communities and help tackling and mitigate the risk of poverty.

Housing Support Grant: £18,489,233.52

Used to secure a Wales where nobody is homeless and everyone has a safe home where they can flourish and live a fulfilled, active and independent life.

This grant is commissioned across a broad range of external providers and internal council departments, all contributing to the tackling poverty agenda in Housing, Adult Services, Child & Family Services and Tackling Poverty Service.

Children and Communities Grant: £11,239,296

Used to address the support needs of the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities through a range of early intervention, prevention and support mechanisms. It seeks to mitigate or remove disadvantage to vulnerable people to enable them to have the same life chances as others, thereby contributing to a more equal Wales.

This grant is commissioned across a broad range of external providers and internal council departments, all contributing to the tackling poverty agenda within our schools through Flying Start, Education, Child & Family Services and Tackling Poverty Service.

Initiatives that contribute to Tackling Poverty are across all directorates and these not broken down into spend directly on Tackling Poverty within budgets but examples of these initiatives are in section 5.

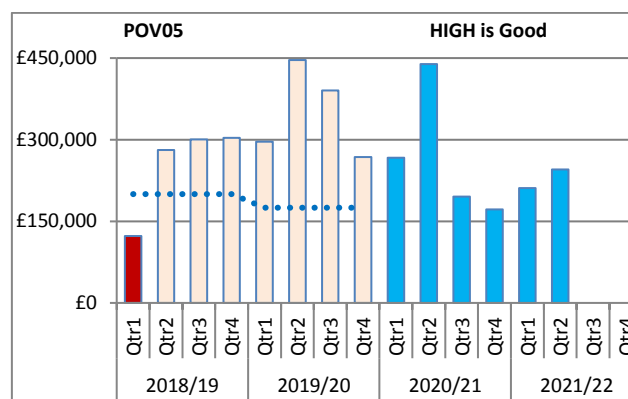
5. Delivery and Performance

Success is demonstrated through work to help tackle, mitigate and help overcome the causes and effects of poverty. Giving people opportunities for employment, work or training; mitigating the impacts of income poverty; preventing the causes of social exclusion, including homelessness; helping to mitigate the effects of the 'poverty premium' on housing, fuel and transport costs, and helping to remove barriers to employment.

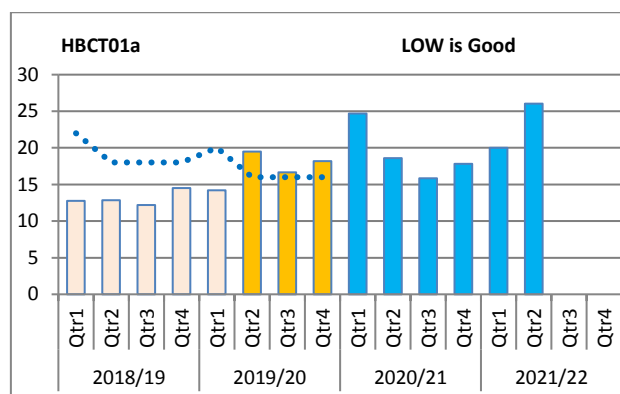
None of the corporate priorities can be seen in isolation from each other. Each priority both affects and is affected by the others. For example, Tackling Poverty is both important to our efforts to improve education and skills and improve the economy. For this reason, many of the performance indicators allocated to measuring one priority can also be used to show progress meeting other priorities.

Corporate Tackling Poverty Performance Measures

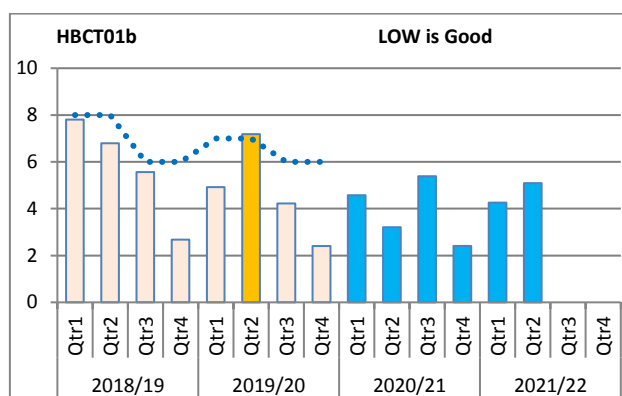
Welfare Benefits secured by the Welfare Rights Service



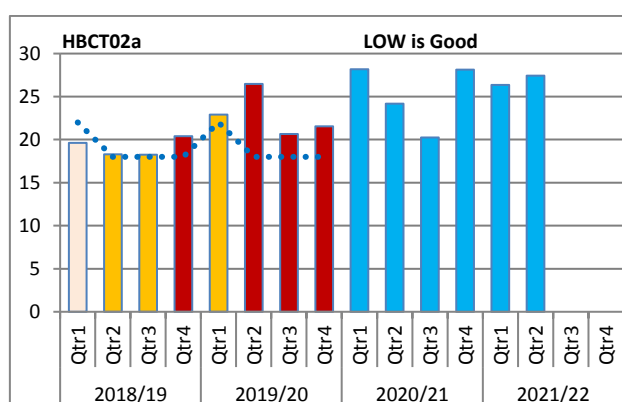
Housing Benefit: Speed processing new claims



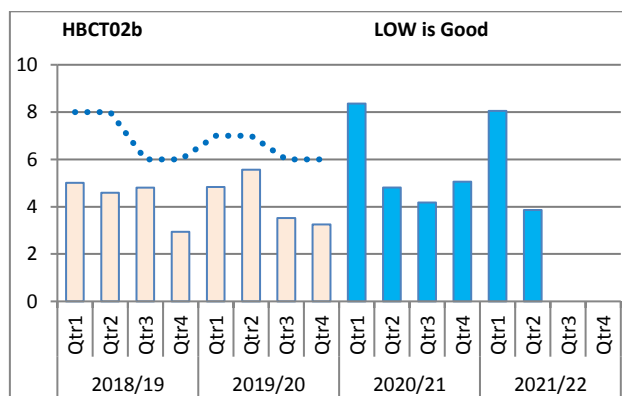
Housing Benefit: Average time processing change in circumstances



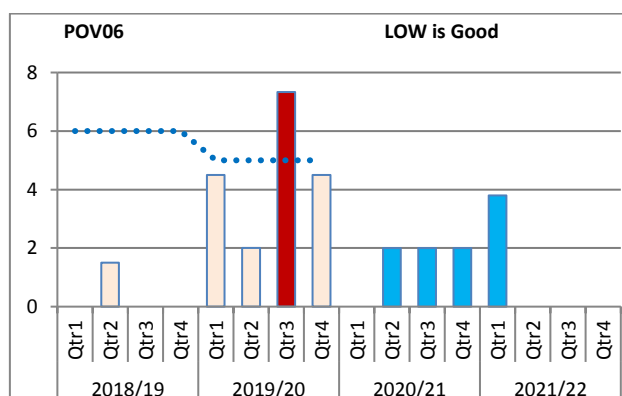
Council Tax Reduction: Average time processing new claims



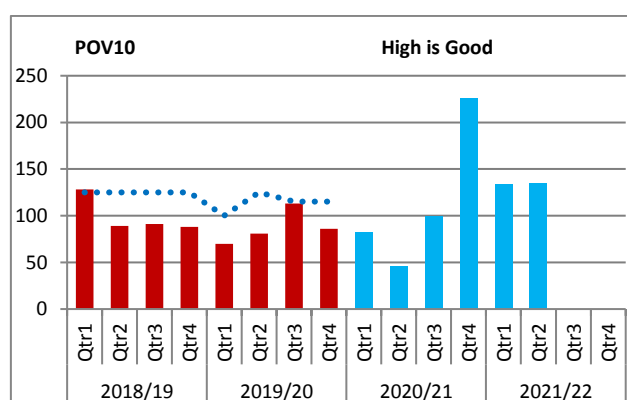
Council Tax Reduction: Average time processing change in circumstances



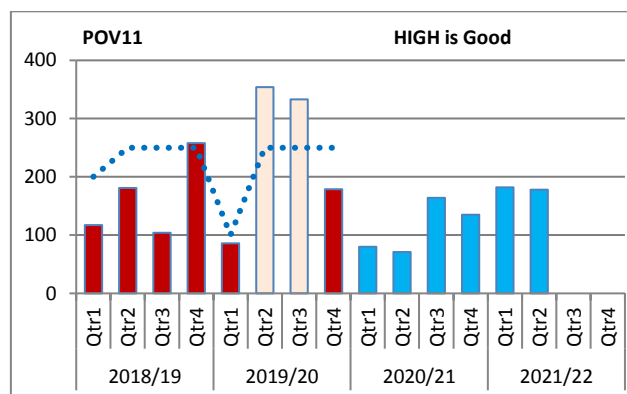
Average number of days homeless families with children spent in B&B accommodation



Number of people gaining employment through employment through Employability Support



Number of accredited qualifications achieved by adults with local authority support

**Progress on delivery of Tackling Poverty related Council Policy Commitments (since 2017) includes:****Working towards reducing poverty and increasing prosperity (policy commitment 78)**

- 2,504 People supported by Communities for Work / Plus
- 994 People supported into work through Communities for Work / Plus
- 1186 people supported by Workways
- 433 people supported into work over 16hrs through Workways
- 6,842 people supported (since April 2018) through Swansea Working

- 2,260 people have gained accredited qualifications (since 2019) through Swansea Working
- £6,200,571.51 Welfare Rights Entitlements realised through Welfare Rights
- 1073 support workers have accessed Welfare Rights training and seminars
- 1,392 accredited qualifications achieved through Lifelong Learning
- 8,339 enrolments in lifelong learning classes
- 2000+ participants in the Swansea Learning Festival as a part of UNESCO City of Learning
- Implementation of Swansea Poverty Truth Commission
- Corporate focus on Tackling Poverty through the Swansea Council Poverty Forum
- Facilitation of partnership approaches to Tackling Poverty through Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum
- Facilitation of Swansea's Financial Inclusion Steering Group

Support Community enterprises, Growing and cooking skills to help people escape food poverty (policy commitment 49)

A total of £463,484 of funding allocated to over 100 applications supporting organisations to tackle food poverty and food insecurity from ensuring crisis food parcels and hot meals are available to those in need, to building on opportunities for community food growing and developing cooking skills.

- 19/20: £111,291 allocated via 26 grants
- 20/21: £154,773 allocated via 41 grants
- 21/22: £197,420 allocated via 38 grants (to date)

Facilitation and support of Swansea Food Poverty Network

Follow the co-productive one council model and ensure that Elected Members and staff work together to empower local communities and ensure their voices are heard (policy commitment 51)

- The Corporate Recovery Plan 'Achieving Better Together' includes the Community Response work stream focused on increased outcomes from working together as the Council, Third Sector and Communities.
- The council has introduced a Socio-economic strategy that will see further development of co-production and engagement with the community.
- Children and Young People and Older Persons Forums are supported to ensure inclusive, meaningful & effective models for engaging and hearing the voice of the people of Swansea in order to shape services and identify opportunities to build back better and stronger following the pandemic.
- The Partnership & Involvement Team have been re-engaging with communities, groups, services and individuals to highlight partnership and involvement opportunities, supporting co-production, consultations and identifying opportunities for joint working.
- The Local Area Coordination team expanded to cover every community in Swansea, with coproduced recruitment.
- Local Area Coordinators have worked with individuals helping them have voice, control and choice and supporting communities become more resilient and confident. Examples of coproduction include Community Events in several areas which have been set up and run by residents and Men's Shed supported in several areas.
- The Swansea Poverty Truth Commission is progressing with a launch planned in 2022.

Continue to stand up for the rights of all people in Swansea to live their lives, freely without fear, hatred, discrimination, or repression regardless of race, colour, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation, gender or age (policy commitment 55).

- Work has been done to consider a rights based approach across the life stages to understand what a “City for all” looks like and to establish a common and measurable framework underpinned by Human Rights.
- Continued to promote Swansea as a City of Sanctuary and welcome people fleeing war, persecution and abuse of human rights. Working with the third sector partners to support and promote concept.
- Schools of Sanctuary within Swansea schools

Adopt a zero tolerance approach to tackling domestic violence and work with partners to fully support victims of domestic violence (policy commitment 59)

- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy including:
- Preventative Family Support work, expanded team - IDVAs, practice leads, specialist response
- Community based programme to raise awareness and change attitudes in the community
- Whole school approach to tackling VAWDASV, including healthy relationships and pathways of support
- Whole systems approach to perpetrator intervention and academic partners evaluating work

Ensure that children and young people are engaged and consulted on council policy and decision making to ensure their voices and opinions are heard. Promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in order to give children a voice. (Policy commitment 93)

- The Children and Young People’s Rights Scheme has been co-produced with children, young people and the Children’s Rights Network and has been recognised as national good practice
- Swansea’s Children’s Rights Network was re-launched. The Network comprises of over 80 organisations, and aims to facilitate a whole authority approach to embedding children’s rights into work.
- The Network coproduced consultation questions to ask children and young people, as well as practitioners and members of the public, their views on effective and inclusive mechanisms for listening children and young people.

Work with older people and the Older People's Commissioner for Wales to establish a Charter for Older People to ensure that our commitment is delivered (policy commitment 122)

- The embedding of human rights of older persons as part of the Council’s commitment to the Dublin Declaration and more recently the formal commitment In Nov 2020 by Swansea’s PSB to work towards “Age Friendly City” status.
- Redevelopment of a partnership approach to Human Rights of people 50+ & Ageing Well in Swansea and the “Ageing Well Steering Group” was re-launched in July 2021.
- Work has been on-going to explore the “Right Way” principled approach to “Human Rights” work with people 50+ means an opportunity to provide clear guidance, and tangible benchmarks for council departments to embed a whole council approach and evidence outcomes relating to the eight domains of the “Age Friendly City” criteria.

Tackling Poverty Service Achievements

Objective	Achievements 2020/21	Achievements to date 2021/22 (6 months)
1. Increase the number of Swansea residents in sustainable and fulfilling employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged and supported 490 clients in employability programmes. Supported 197 people into employment Swansea Working, CFW/+ Engagement and EEO teams have worked in partnership to deliver bespoke initiatives with and for local employers, care leavers and prison leavers resulting in sustainable employment Provided employability clients with welfare rights and financial inclusion advice and support in preparation for employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged and supported 365 clients in employability programmes. Supported 199 people into employment
2. Increase the number of adults with skills and qualifications, ensuring pathways for progression and enhancement of their employability and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,789 learning enrolments (LLS) 73 accreditations achieved (LLS) 541 enrolments for support to increase digital literacy (LLS) 450 clients supported to gain accredited qualifications (Swansea Working) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,552 learning enrolments (LLS) 26 accreditations achieved (LLS) 262 enrolments for support to increase digital literacy (LLS) 55 clients supported to gain accredited qualifications (Swansea Working)
3. Maximise household income, supporting citizens to access their rights and entitlements and make the most of the money they have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responded to 843 benefit enquiries Provided access to the advice line on 157 days Provided 75 appointments for complex cases/appeal representation Represented at 47 appeals 91% success rate at appeals Addressed £167,143.25 of debt Supported 344 employability claimants Raised £1,419,751.33 in welfare benefits for Swansea residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responded to 374 benefit enquiries Provided access to the advice line on 68 days Provided 18 appointments for complex cases/appeal representation Represented at 15 appeals 87% success rate at appeals Addressed £23,299 of debt Raised £465,301 in welfare benefits for Swansea residents
4. Embed Tackling Poverty and Prevention as Everyone's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation of Swansea Council Poverty Forum Support for Policy Development Committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy

Business within Swansea Council and champion change in policy and practice to be more effective in tackling poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Promoting Affordable Credit Policy approved for consultation • Equality Impact Assessments reviewed for impact on those experiencing or at risk of experiencing poverty • The Welfare Rights Team produced 14 benefits updates for staff and partner organisations outlining benefit changes; including four special updates relating to specific benefit changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Promoting Affordable Credit Policy • 7 IIAs / consultations responded to • The Welfare Benefits Team have produced 4 benefits updates to date.
5. Reduce and prevent the impact of poverty by working in partnership and through the implementation of the Poverty and Prevention Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum • Facilitation of Financial Inclusion Steering Group • Established Swansea Food Poverty Network • Swansea Poverty Truth Commission Facilitation Team recruited • Community Calling Project established to distribute 70 recycled smart phones • WRT led on the Pension Credit Take Up campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum and Financial Inclusion Steering Group meetings held • Monthly Swansea Food Poverty Network meetings held • Community Commissioners engaged in Swansea Poverty Truth Commission • 207 smart phones distributed via Community Calling project
6. Contribute positively to citizen's Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 Men's Sheds Grants Awarded (32k) • 114 courses engaging learners and supporting wellbeing (LLS) • Every £1 increase in welfare benefit income is worth £5 to the local economy. • 20,000 requests for support and 2,500 community connections facilitated, • 36% of LLS survey respondents say they attended courses to improve health and wellbeing. • LLS's phone support helped 87 individuals get digitally connected and receive help to access other council services in 20/21. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Men's Sheds Grants Awarded £25,000 • 162 courses engaging learners and supporting wellbeing (LLS) • Local Area Coordinators now in all areas of Swansea.
7. Contribute to the reduction of crisis intervention and demand on services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 Food Poverty Grants Awarded (£156k) • 19 Period Dignity in Communities Grants awarded (£17k) • Coordinated Community Support Programme in partnership with the Children's Society – £25k of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 Food Poverty Grants Awarded £197,420 • 7 Period Dignity in Communities Grants awarded to date £13,200 • Coordinated Community Support Programme in

	<p>funding supported Leaflet for foodbank parcels, EYST Hardship Fund, Housing Justice Citadel Project and The Wallich Home Starter Packs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRT provided advice and information to 843 service users and increased /maintained their benefit income by £1,419,751.33. • LAC Team expanded and over 600 new introductions. 	<p>partnership with Children's Society – supporting development of Worried about Money Leaflet and development of a new referral system for organisations in Swansea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAC Team covering all areas in Swansea
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Covid Focused Responses

- 850 requests for food help responded to via the Covid-19 Helpline.
- 7,700 food parcels delivered to those that were shielding and in need during the pandemic
- 25,000+ community response requests supported during the peak of the pandemic
- Supported the mobilisation of community responses
- Launching a volunteer recruitment strategy with SCVS and training programme to support thousands of individuals who volunteered to engage in supporting their communities.
- Temporary community Food Hubs established to distribute emergency food provision to food banks
- Supported the Welsh Housing Award Winning 'Swansea Together' project providing 1,000's hot meals to vulnerable people and to those in temporary housing
- Public engagement to promote community safety messages.
- ICT equipment loan scheme for digitally excluded residents
- Expanded Welfare Rights Advice Line to five days per week.
- Regular corporate website information updates from Welfare Rights about benefit entitlements brought about as a result of the pandemic including isolation payments.
- 1000's 'Street Champions' mobilised during the pandemic providing practical and social support in their communities.
- £50,000 grants to support the development and expansion of Men's Sheds in Swansea to promote well-being and improve mental health
- Use of the Welsh Government's Child Development Fund to support the initial impact of Covid- on children in their early years. The work focused on training and resources for parents, additional resource for Third sector projects to support children, intensive Early Years support within Schools and the promotion of engagement, bonding and attachment.

6. Case Studies

Help to address the impacts of Welfare reform, such as supporting people to claim the full benefits they are entitled to so that they are able to maximise their income and promote access to affordable credit:

Pension Credit Case Study – Welfare Rights Team

In 2020, the Tackling Poverty Service Welfare Rights Team, Care and Repair Western Bay and Citizen's Advice ran a free advice line to enable pensioners to check whether they were missing out benefits. Research has suggested that 2 in every 5 people who qualify for this benefit, do not claim what they are entitled to and were on average missing out on £39-a-week. The research also suggested that other family members who live with them have also been missing out on other benefits and each additional £1 people receive in benefit is worth £4 to the local economy, helping to support local jobs and local businesses.

One pensioner said: *"I only rang up to see if I qualified, I didn't, but my son who lives with me was missing out on £37.50 a week."*

Another added: *"My daughter, who I live with, has received a 25% discount on her council tax so it's well worth giving this line a ring as we didn't know anything about this."*

Entitlement to Pension Credit also entitles claimants to fringe benefits including help with travel costs to hospital and NHS charges, access to a free TV licence, discretionary assistance payments to assist with purchasing one off items and they are automatically processed through the financial means test for Housing benefit and Council tax reduction.

One pensioner who called added: *"I've now got some money in my pocket, so no longer have to penny pinch. With the arrears I am going to take my family out for a meal once restrictions have been lifted."*

Financial Inclusion Case Study – Welfare Rights Team

The Financial Inclusion Team received a referral from an Employability Mentor to provide financial guidance for a client. The gentleman concerned lives with his stepfather and claims the standard allowance of UC only. Out of this, he pays around £50 'keep' per week, has deductions in his UC for child maintenance payments and is paying off some small debts.

His stepfather has health issues – COPD and chronic heart disease, placing him in the 'vulnerable' category for COVID-19 and is a benefits claimant himself. As a member of a low-income household, the gentleman had been making efforts to elevate his career options and had just completed a work trial and was offered permanent full time employment.

However, just as he was due to start his new role he contracted COVID-19. Due to the vulnerability of his stepfather, he went to isolate at his girlfriend's house and she and her 3 children had also tested positive. Because he and his girlfriend had to self-isolate they were unable to go out to obtain supplies; had only enough food for one small meal for the 5 of them, they had no money in the bank and were unable to purchase tokens to put in the gas and electricity meters which were extremely low.

A major concern for the household was food, so an emergency food parcel was arranged to be delivered that evening. A Discretionary Assistance Fund was also applied for and he was awarded £50, which would help to see him through until his next UC payment. He was

advised to contact Citizens Advice who provided him with fuel vouchers which have been supported by Swansea Council. As a result of this support he felt that he'd sleep better that night, knowing they would have enough gas, electric and food over the weekend.

A full benefit check was then carried out to ensure he was claiming everything he was entitled to and a 'Better off Calculation' to give him an idea of how his financial situation would improve when he is well enough to commence his new job. A budgeting tool was also recommended so that he can stay abreast of his finances, going forward. Appropriate links to grants, schemes and websites were provided for him to look at including Welsh Water HelpU and Customer Assistance Fund, Warm Homes Discount and Uswitch to look at lowering his bills, as well as a PowerUp! flyer for households vulnerable to power cuts and a Turn2Us link, so that he can check for charitable funds and grants available to himself. He was also informed about 'Breathing Space', should his debts become unmanageable in future.

This gentleman discovered he had caught COVID-19 and supplied his new employer with medical evidence every step of the way, isolated properly, with efforts to keep everyone safe and provided for the children before himself, which demonstrates that anyone, with the best of intentions can fall on hard times or have a run of bad luck and need some financial help and guidance. He was extremely grateful and happy with the service, thanking the team and the organisation on the service he had been provided.

Support individuals to overcome their barriers to employment through coordinated person-centred employability support:

Employability Case Study – Children and Communities Grant

AR came to the programme with a job offer, but was worried he would not be able to take this up, as he was required to gain a 'Client Contractor National Safety Group' (CCNSG) qualification before he was due to start otherwise the offer of employment would be withdrawn.

AR explained that he has just returned from prison and was struggling mentally. He went on to state that this job offer could be the "start of making it work" in his new home in Swansea, but if he was not able to take it up then he would not be sure where he would go next, as he felt that his criminal record would prevent him from getting work.

Via the relationship Communities for Work programme has with various training providers, it was possible to secure a place on the next available CCNSG course prior to the start date of the job.

AR was very relieved and accepted the place on the course. The only issue being that AR did not have a car at this time, so would need transport to get to this training. A bus pass was arranged via the employability Barriers Fund so that AR could attend the course and he was very grateful for the level of support he received.

AR attended and passed the training allowing him to successfully take up the post. Before AR exited the programme however, he asked if he could be supported with clothing for work which were procured via the Barriers Fund. The clothes were then collected and delivered to AR.

AR was once again very thankful for everything Communities for Work Plus had done for him and provided very positive feedback on the exit forms when he left the programme.

Ensure that young people are able to access employment, education or training after reaching 16 years of age:

St David's Day Fund – Children and Communities Grant

JF is a 19 year old female open to the leaving care service. She has no family or other people to support her. She has been in a long-term relationship where she has been the victim of domestic abuse. Having secured independent accommodation JF has accessed the St David's Day fund to purchase items for her accommodation to help her establish her independence and begin to make a safe home for herself. When her relationship was going well JF would spend time living in her partners accommodation causing her own tenancy to be neglected. This led to arrears on her gas and electric, caused damage to the personal items in her home, spoiled food and damaged clothing. When JF fled her partner's home she was able to utilise the St David's Day fund for help to restore utilities, purchase food, cleaning materials and replacement items for her flat. This initially happened on two occasions. Following a third and serious incident of domestic violence JF was placed in alternative accommodation and again received financial help to set herself up in her new accommodation. This incident led to the end of her relationship.

Following a period of stability JF has been able to improve her self-esteem and has enrolled on a course in a local college. She again accessed the St David's Day fund to purchase uniform clothes for the course as well as the extensive amount of equipment needed for the course.

JF remains in college and is making good progress on the course. The ability to use the fund flexibly to meet this need has ensured that she was able to join her peers on the course fully equipped and feeling confident as initially she been concerned that she would stand out due to a lack of appropriate family support.

Local Area Coordination Case Study

CL was introduced to the Local Area Coordinator by their Housing Officer for food support during the pandemic. They were not in contact regularly, but CL knew to call if needed. CL is elderly, lives alone, has no family in Swansea, and rarely leaves their home due to poor health.

Unfortunately, CL was the victim of a phone scam, and money was stolen from their bank account. It was completely devastating for them to lose their life savings. As CL is on their own, they had no one to lean on for support during this distressing time; CL did not know what to do or how to fix it.

The Local Area Coordinator met with CL to work through exactly what had happened and how the money had been taken from their account. She listened to CL's concerns, giving their space to talk openly about how they felt; CL was understandably angry, frustrated and sad, and felt vulnerable and embarrassed. As CL lost such a huge amount of money, the Local Area Coordinator sought support from the Council's Trading Standards department.

The Local Area Coordinator and Trading Standards worked well together, reassuring CL that they had nothing to be embarrassed about, and encouraging CL that they would do all they could in supporting them to get their money back.

CL was very apprehensive at the start of this process; they felt so stressed and was close to giving up. The process going forward was not a simple one. Working with the local Housing

Office, over a period of two months, and after multiple incredibly long phone calls with the bank, CL received the wonderful news that the bank would refund their money. Trading Standards and the Local Area Coordinator advocated on CL's behalf initially, but with encouragement, CL went on to advocate for themselves. Not only was the money returned, the bank also increased this by £200 out of courtesy. The bank commented that they rarely return such amounts of money, especially when all of their protocols and procedures were followed perfectly by staff when CL got scammed; it is only because they were made aware of their circumstances and their case was argued, that CL received their money back.

CL is absolutely over the moon. CL never imagined that they would get all their savings back. She mentioned multiple times that *'I would never have had the confidence to pursue this without Ray (Trading Standards) and my Local Area Coordinator being by my side – they encouraged and reassured me and gave me the confidence I needed'*.

CL no longer needs to worry about their future and their finances. They can contact Ray or their Local Area Coordinator with any queries, and has more awareness of scams and how they work. CL is very grateful for the support they received and still keeps in touch with the Local Area Coordinator every now and then.

Prevent homelessness and support people to maintain their tenancies to help provide stability and security for families and communities by implementing the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2018-22:

Ty Tom Jones Case Study

In response to the COVID emergency, Swansea Council, Pobl, The Wallich and Goleudy came together to rapidly set up a new supported temporary accommodation project, in a condensed timeframe – six weeks rather than the normal 12-18 months to get a project of this scale up and running. During early April 2020, as a response to the Welsh Government's directive to house all rough sleepers, the Council was placing large numbers in B&B. Despite a good supply of supported housing projects in Swansea, they were at full capacity and due to the pandemic, move-on to permanent accommodation slowed down with significant reductions in new lettings across all tenures. Various solutions were considered to support the response and at this point Pobl Housing Association offered Ty Tom Jones, a city centre building formerly operating as a youth homelessness project, for use as a temporary supported housing project during the crisis. A Collaborative Working Group was set up with the Council, Pobl, The Wallich and Goleudy to develop the project.

Each organisation received substantial internal support (e.g. from their executive boards, Cabinet Members, legal department, maintenance service, procurement etc.) to move things forward at pace and take on board the risks associated with the project. The attitude from each organisation was to do whatever it took to get the project up and running. The additional COVID Emergency Homelessness Funding that the Welsh Government made available at the start of the pandemic was also a critical element to enable the establishment of the Project.

The project was successfully set up to provide COVID safe accommodation for 20 individuals providing them with en-suite facilities and communal kitchen space. Long term funded has now been secured 61 to ensure the project will remain in place and it has been expanded to provide an additional four units of accommodation.

Invest to improve housing and build more energy efficient Council homes and support the building of affordable housing to help meet housing need, reduce fuel bills, regenerate estates and bring wider economic and employment benefits:

More Homes Programme

16 new homes at Parc Y Helyg and 18 new homes at Colliers Way were completed in September 2020 and April 2021 respectively and were pathfinders for the City Deal programme “Homes as Power Stations”. These new homes have been built to incorporate energy efficient measures, such as solar panels and battery powered energy, as well as the inclusion of swift bricks to support biodiversity in their construction. Work was also been completed on a conversion of a former social services building in West Cross into two new family homes and eight one-bedroom homes are being developed at a former Lifelong Learning site in Uplands.

Continue to implement the Community Cohesion Delivery Plan to promote cohesive and inclusive communities in Swansea:

Community Cohesion

Continued to promote Community Cohesion through a range of on-line events including National Hate Crime awareness week, Welsh Government Hate Crime campaigns, Interfaith week, LGBT+ History month, Black History month and the Holocaust Memorial day. This year included promoting awareness of the EU settlement scheme (EUSS) to encourage EU nationals and their family members to apply for “pre-settled” or “settled status” to ensure that they are eligible for access to public services.

Support the establishment of a Poverty Truth Commission to bring together key decision makers with people who have direct lived experience of poverty to work together to bring about change:

Swansea’s Poverty Truth Commission

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, we had been working with partners to develop a Swansea Poverty Truth Commission, which will be the first Poverty Truth Commission in Wales. The aim of the Poverty Truth Commission is to place those affected by poverty at the heart of decision making about poverty.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has delayed the pace of delivery, a Commission is establishing, which includes a mix of Community Commissioners with lived experience of poverty and key decision makers, known as Civic/Business Commissioners. The Facilitation Team has been recruited and are hosted by SCVS (Swansea Council for Voluntary Service) and work is currently underway to identify the themes that the Poverty Truth Commission will focus on.

Provide a joint and holistic response to poverty, population health and homelessness during the Council’s Covid-19 response and recovery:

#HereforSwansea – Covid Community Response

Swansea Council have worked closely with colleagues and partners to support those in need throughout the Pandemic.

A Covid 19 Helpline and Food Help Administration Team was established for the Shielding cohort and those in need, consisting of staff reallocated from their normal roles. The Helpline Team were set up to work from home, taking calls and signposting individuals need support to access food to the Food Help Administration Team who could then register shielding people for the Welsh Government Shielding Food Parcels, Foodbanks or help with shopping via the Local Area Coordination Team.

A number of teams also supported the free school meals delivery service. Initially this was for families that were isolating or unable to collect the 'grab bags' from school sites; but evolved to home delivery as the lockdown continued, before the availability of bacs payments.

Officers provided support to the community foodbank network via four 'Food Distribution Hubs'; taking receipt of purchased product to ensure the community foodbanks supplies were strong.

In the early days of lockdown, following the closure of restaurants, cafes, and drop in centres alongside the placement of homeless and vulnerable individuals in temporary accommodation, further links with Matthew's House and Swansea Together linked donations from local cafes and restaurants wishing to donate their surplus products. Matthew's House and a range of other partners such as the kitchen at Mecca Bingo, coordinated a supply of pre-prepared meals and essentials such as bottled water to the most vulnerable in the city, enabling them to stay indoors and safe, during the early days of the crisis.

7. Challenges and Risks

The Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted low income households, pushing more people into poverty and those experiencing it, further into poverty resulting in an increase in demand for services including crisis support services and increased complexities for those in need.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report ‘**UK Poverty 2020/21**’³ states that:

Before coronavirus, an unacceptable 14.4 million people in the UK were caught up in poverty, equating to more than one in five people. Child poverty and in-work poverty had been on the rise for several years and some groups were disproportionately likely to be pulled into poverty. Many of those groups already struggling most to stay afloat have also borne the brunt of the economic and health impacts of Covid-19. These include:

- Part-time workers, low paid workers and sectors where there are much higher rates of in-work poverty, such as accommodation and food services.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic households.
- Lone parents – mostly women, many of whom work in hard-hit sectors – who are more reliant on local jobs, and are more likely to have struggled with childcare during the lockdown.
- Private renters, who have higher housing costs, and social renters, who tend to have lower incomes, both leading to higher poverty rates. Renters in work are also more likely to be in a sector more affected by coronavirus.
- Areas of the UK where there were already higher levels of unemployment, poverty and deprivation.

A report by the Child Poverty Action Group, ‘**Poverty in the Pandemic: The impact of coronavirus on low-income families and children**’,⁴ published in August 2020, found that of the low-income working families interviewed, most experienced a significant reduction in their earnings, due to one or more of the following:

- Being made redundant before or early on in the pandemic, and being unable to find new employment or having to accept shorter hours and/or lower pay.
- Being furloughed on less than full pay or experiencing a reduction in working hours or income from self-employment, pushing many low earners into or deeper into poverty.
- Missing out on the government’s income support schemes, because their employer refused to furlough them or because they have only recently become self-employed.
- Being limited in their ability to maintain or find employment because of additional caring responsibilities and/or restrictions in childcare provision.

The Bevan Foundation’s Report ‘**A Snapshot of Poverty in Spring 2021**’ (Wales)⁵ identified that:

- One in five Welsh Households have seen their incomes decrease between January and May 2021. This is on top of nearly a quarter of households which saw their incomes fall between March and December 2020.
- More than one in five households with a net income of less than £20,000 have seen their income drop since January 2021.

³ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2020-21>

⁴ <https://cpag.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/report/poverty-pandemic-impact-coronavirus-low-income-families-and-children>

⁵ <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/resources/poverty-in-spring-2021/>

- For households with a net income of more than £40,000, more than one in five have seen their incomes increase.
- Households across Wales have seen their living costs increase. Social renters and parents and guardians have been especially affected by rising costs.
- 43% of households are spending more on heating, electricity / water.
- 38% of households are spending more on food.
- 20% of households are spending more on internet costs or devices to access the internet.
- Social renters have been four times more likely to see their housing costs rise than people living in other tenures.
- Households with children have also faced pressures on their living costs, being more likely to report increased spending on everyday items than households without children.
- A third of Welsh Households never have enough money to buy anything beyond day to day items.
- Over 40,000 households (3% of all households) often or always do not have enough for the basics, whilst nearly 70,000 (5% of all households) sometimes for not have enough for the basics. Combined this is approx. 110,000 households in Wales (8% of all households) struggle to have enough for everyday essentials at least some of the time.
- Personal Debt is a problem: Since January 2021, 10% of Welsh households (Over 130,000 households) have fallen behind on a bill, whilst 17% (Over 230,000 households) have borrowed money to pay a bill.
- Low-income households, renters, disabled people, lone parents and adults aged 25 – 64 are more likely to be behind on a bill or have borrowed money than others.

The current delivery of Tackling Poverty initiatives is reliant on grant funding, predominately from the Welsh Government. If grants cease then we will not be able to deliver the range of services as effectively as we would like in order to ensure service continuity and to safeguard preventative activities for economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of residents. There are a number of initiatives still funded by EU funds including Communities for Work Employability programme of over £732,000 per annum which is due to come to an end in 2023.

8. Future Tackling Poverty Priorities

Based on the experience of delivery since the Tackling Poverty Strategy was published, learning from the Covid-19 response and the current social, economic and environmental position; the following priorities have been identified for future focus:

1. Enable strong families and communities.
2. Improve educational attainment, routes to further and higher education, training or employment and opportunities for learning throughout life.
3. Improve access to affordable and secure homes.
4. Improve opportunities for participation for all including social, cultural, leisure activities and coproduced solutions.
5. Maximise incomes and reduce costs.
6. Promote economic growth that is accessible, inclusive and benefits everyone.
7. Support people to improve their employability, find work that pays fairly and progress in work.
8. Reduce health inequalities and improve well-being.
9. Improve access to green space and opportunities to grow food.
10. Support people in crisis or risk of crisis / most vulnerable.

A poverty tracker with local statistics to identify trends and to inform delivery is in development. There will be a range of primary and secondary indicators in relation to each of the above priorities. For example, for priority 5, maximising incomes and reducing costs would include tracking Gross Disposable Household Income and the percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.

Poverty is far reaching and we will continue to demonstrate the impact of supporting people in a holistic way through case studies and stories alongside existing performance data to highlight the impact of the continued focus on Tackling Poverty.